

eye irritation. And those are just the short-term health effects that we know about. I wouldn't be surprised if even more serious health effects are soon found. Affected families have been left with an impossible choice: live in a home and put their family at risk, or shell out tens, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars, to replace the drywall. While some more fortunate families have been able to get help from friends, relatives and neighbors, many others have moved into rental housing, forcing them to pay both rent and the mortgage on the contaminated home. At a time when the economy is already struggling, this hardship is more than families can sustain.

Today, I urge my colleagues to support this resolution encouraging banks and mortgage servicers to work with their customers by allowing a grace period on their mortgage payments until they get back on their feet. Many banking institutions have already voluntarily provided mortgage forbearances for many of their customers, and I applaud the benevolence of these institutions. This can be a lifesaver for affected families.

Madam Speaker, as we work to create long-term solutions, we must also find a way to give these families some relief now. I want to thank my friends Mr. WEXLER and Mrs. MCCARTHY; my colleague from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN); Mr. BUCHANAN; as well as Ms. WATERS and Chairman FRANK for working with me on this important legislation, and I hope the rest of my colleagues will join me in its support.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WITTMAN. I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to echo the comments of Mr. NYE from Virginia. Having visited a number of these homes, the health effects from this toxic drywall are very apparent. The sulfur there is pungent. Just in the time that I spent there, I experienced some of the same systems, runny nose, itchy eyes, irritation of the lungs, a cough; and that was just in the very short period of time of about 2 hours. I can only imagine what those families have to endure under those conditions and living in those homes. So our hearts and minds and concerns go out to them.

Last week, the Consumer Product Safety Commission released the results of their most recent study of 51 homes. There was a lot of effort to try to get the Consumer Product Safety Commission to do a study on this toxic drywall. Their study did not find anything now that is conclusive about the health effects of drywall, but the Consumer Product Safety Commission did commit to continue the study because we all believe that just looking at 51 homes doesn't look at the full scope of this problem. This problem is in over 2,100 instances, and we know there are more across 32 States. So they've committed to work continually to identify

which compounds could be causing these health problems.

Their study found a strong association between the problem drywall, the hydrogen sulfide level in homes with that drywall, and corrosion in these homes. These two preliminary studies of corrosion of metal components taken from homes containing the problem drywall found copper sulfide corrosion in the initial samples tested, which supports the finding of an association between hydrogen sulfide and the corrosion.

Ongoing laboratory tests continue to investigate the nexus between safety and the short- and long-term effects of such corrosion not only on the homes, but it should also be looking at the effects on individuals that inhabit those homes. Based on these studies completed to date, the interagency task force can begin a new phase by developing a protocol to identify homes with corrosive drywall and a process to address the corrosive drywall and its effects.

I urge the task force to work expeditiously to complete the study phase and to release its protocols for identifying impacted homes and for remediation. This resolution will give homeowners the time they need to make decisions based on the Consumer Product Safety Commission studies and protocols for a more permanent solution to their situation.

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 197, to encourage banks and mortgage servicers to work with families affected by contaminated drywall to allow temporary forbearance without penalty on payment on their home mortgages. I am a proud cosponsor of this Resolution.

Along with thousands of affected homeowners across the country, my constituents are waiting for answers on the potential health and safety hazards posed by toxic drywall imported from China between 2004 and 2007. The corrosion of electrical wiring, home appliance failure, the emission of strong odorous gases, and health problems such as headaches, nausea, and throat irritation, are just some of the commonly reported problems associated with Chinese drywall.

Although a federal Interagency Task Force has been investigating this problem for nearly one year, suffering homeowners have still not been provided federal guidelines for inspection or remediation of their homes containing Chinese drywall. Basic questions remain unanswered, such as whether these homes are safe for people to reside in; whether Chinese drywall may combine with other common home fixtures or chemicals to cause additional harms. Homeowners continue to wait for answers from their government. Despite nearly 2,000 reported cases of Chinese drywall to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and untold thousands more still unreported, committees in the House of Representatives have yet to hold one investigative hearing on the matter. Members deserve the opportunity to hear from expert witnesses across the spectrum of this growing crisis. Health, financial, safety, and legal ramifications need to be explored in depth so that appropriate action may be taken on behalf of so many American homeowners and affected businesses.

Madam Speaker, H. Con. Res. 197 is a step in the right direction. At this juncture, it is important that all those impacted by this drywall, from homeowners and builders to developers and banks and mortgage companies, work together with understanding until more answers are provided on the effects of this toxic drywall. I urge my colleagues to hold immediate congressional hearings on this issue, and I urge them to demonstrate their support in bringing relief to thousands of Americans whose homes have been so severely affected by Chinese drywall.

Mr. POSEY. Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand in support of this resolution as a cosponsor.

Contaminated drywall mostly manufactured in China and used in new home construction in the last decade, primarily between 2006 and 2007, has had a devastating impact on the housing industry in Florida and more importantly on the lives of thousands of homeowners and their families.

So far the Consumer Product Safety Commission has received more than 2,000 complaints from affected homeowners in at least 32 states and the District of Columbia. More than three-quarters of these complaints come from Florida. While we do not yet know the full extent of this problem, it appears that this concern is likely to grow considerably larger.

Homeowners with contaminated Chinese drywall have experienced a number of household and health problems. The drywall emits sulfuric compounds which cause corrosion in copper fittings commonly used in plumbing and air conditioning as well as electrical components. Many homeowners have had to replace hardware such as air conditioning coils, carbon monoxide detectors, and smoke alarms multiple times in as little as a year. In addition to the corrosive effects of the sulfuric gases, homeowners have experienced a variety of related health issues, which have forced many to move out of their homes. Common symptoms include eye irritation and breathing problems.

As you can imagine, this is financially and emotionally devastating for homeowners. As a result of contaminated drywall, many homes have dropped precipitously in value. Many people have lost their life savings which was invested in a home which they can now neither live in nor sell. Some have become desperate and chosen to walk away from their mortgages in the hope of starting fresh elsewhere. Still others are continuing to pay their mortgages while taking on the added burden of paying for an alternative living arrangement in the hopes that they can hang on long enough for a remediation protocol to be announced.

I recently toured some of these homes in the Antilles community in my district and I met with affected homeowners. Just a few minutes in one of these houses is enough time to start feeling the symptoms that have caused so many homes to become unlivable. Affected homeowners need help and they need help quickly.

I was pleased that the Federal Inter-Agency Drywall Task Force, headed by the CPSC, released the results of their 51-home study this month. I was encouraged to see some signs of progress from the task force. I was particularly encouraged that the task force officially established a scientific link between the contaminated drywall and the resulting corrosion.